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PROBATION SERVICES

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1820 Peerless, El Cerrito
Western Adult Division - 231-3041
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DEPARTMENTAL GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

As a sub-system component of the Criminal Justice System, the goal and objectives of the Probation Department must be in harmony with and supportive to the goal and objectives of the larger system. The Criminal Justice System is that apparatus society uses to enforce standards of conduct necessary to protect life and property. In carrying out this mission, the system has four major objectives:

1. To remove dangerous persons from the community;
2. To deter others from criminal behavior;
3. To provide an opportunity for offenders to become law-abiding citizens;
4. To administer justice fairly and with due process.

Each major sub-system, Law Enforcement, Courts and Corrections, share these objectives to one degree or another, but all are interdependent. The Juvenile Justice System, conceived as a separate but related system, carried an original intent to provide for the welfare of children through an informed, non-adversary judicial process to deter youthful misbehavior from progressing to criminal conduct. In reality, the Juvenile Justice System is an adversary process, is legalistic and must also concern itself with the protection of society from the acts of youthful offenders.

It is the role of Probation to serve the Courts, the community and those offenders placed under its jurisdiction by statute and Court order. Where conflict may arise, the objectives of the probation officer shall be guided by the Courts, a concern for community protection and the best interests of the clients it services, in that order. The goal of the Contra Costa County Probation Department is:

**TO PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE PROBATION SERVICES
TO THE COURTS, COMMUNITY AND OFFENDERS.**

JUVENILE JUSTICE-DELINQUENCY PREVENTION COMMISSION

This fifteen member advisory group is actually two Commissions that sit on a monthly basis as a single body. Its functions are to advise the Probation Officer and Juvenile Court on those matters related to the overall administration of juvenile justice within the Court and provide leadership in the development of delinquency prevention activities within the County.

The juvenile justice functions of the Commission are mandated by authority found in the Welfare and Institutions Code. In this regard, it hears reports from those who have responsibility for providing services to youngsters coming within the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court and, based upon the information it receives, provides an annual report on its findings with recommendations to the Juvenile Court, the Board of Supervisors and the California Youth Authority.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM

The staff of the Probation Department is made up of individuals of widely varying ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. Each contributes to the Department's goal of service to the client population and the community. Through the Affirmative Action Plan, special efforts are being made to have appropriate minority representation of the staff.

TRAINING

The Training Officer plans, develops and coordinates Department training. He also assists in the coordination of classes with other agencies within the Criminal Justice System and community resources.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Probation Department has had many positive experiences in its long history of providing opportunities for volunteers to participate with Department employees in achieving Department goals. Volunteers have successfully participated in many of the Department's activities and have provided recreation, athletic, counseling and other supportive services.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC

The Psychological Clinic is composed of a Supervising Psychologist and one psychologist. The primary function of this unit is to perform diagnostic evaluations on probationers referred by deputy probation officers, the Courts, and institutional staff. These written evaluations are used by various personnel and the Courts as an aid in understanding case dynamics so that appropriate actions can be taken, both from the standpoint of community protection and effective therapeutic efforts. Another function performed by the Psychological Clinic staff is case consultation to Probation Department staff and, at times, personnel from other agencies such as police departments and schools. Also, the psychologists do short-term psychotherapy with a limited number of probationers. The Supervising Psychologist serves as a consultant to the Boys' Ranch at Byron.

ADULT PROBATION SERVICES

I. Introduction

The Adult Division of the Probation Department is an integral adjunct to the County's Superior and Municipal Court system. Pursuant to provisions of law and directives from the Court, the Division has the responsibility to provide investigation and supervision services for the Criminal Courts throughout the County. These functions are basic, but over the years legislative, judicial and social mandates have added to the complexity of the provision of these services.

II. Adult Investigations

The investigative function is performed at the direction of the Criminal Courts of the County. The purpose of this function is to provide information to the Courts so that the Courts can determine if convicted or accused defendants can benefit from probation supervision. Recommendations are made to the Courts regarding disposition of cases.

The investigation process involves an examination of the circumstances surrounding the defendant's involvement in the offense, the type and extent of damage or injury to victims, mitigating, extenuating or aggravating factors relating to the offense, prior criminal history of the defendant, social and employment history of the defendant, and any other information that will help the Courts arrive at a disposition. The investigating probation officer makes an overall assessment of the defendant's case. The result of the investigation and assessment are developed into a written report with recommendations to the Courts.

The written report performs several important functions to many elements in the Criminal Justice System. It is used by the Courts, the District Attorney, defense counsel, State and County institutions, the County Parole Board, the State Parole System, treatment programs, hospitals, clinics and, if the defendant is granted probation, by the supervising deputy probation officer.

Community protection is of paramount concern in developing recommendations to the Courts. Alternatives to incarceration are recommended only when it is reasonable to do so and when the results of the investigation suggest that the defendant has the potential to alter his/her behavior and become a law abiding and productive member of the community.

III. Adult Supervision

The supervision of convicted or diverted offenders is by Court order and serves to implement the specific and general conditions of probation as imposed by the Courts. The purposes of supervision are protection of the community and to provide assistance to offenders in becoming law abiding and productive members of the community.

The supervision practice encompasses a range of approaches which are designed to meet the particular needs of the individual offender's case. These approaches range from rigid limit setting and close monitoring of the offender's activities, to complex and supportive counseling and the selective use of appropriate community resources.

Most probationers have special conditions of probation as part of their probation grant. Conditions, such as fines, restitution to victims, contributing work to the community, chemical testing to detect illegal use of certain drugs and alcohol, are enforced.

IV. Special Services and Programs

Special services and programs have evolved to more effectively utilize staff time, to enhance services to the Courts, to the community and to the probationer. They also serve to better utilize available resources in the community. The number and types of special services and programs change from time to time based upon need and the availability of funding.

A. Resource Officer Function

The resource officer function has the responsibility to locate, evaluate and monitor services provided by community resources. The resources are both residential and out-patient. They include drug treatment programs, alcohol treatment programs, psychological treatment programs and vocational and educational programs. The tasks of the resource officers are to assist regular Probation staff and the Courts to ensure effective, appropriate and economic utilization of all available resources in the community.

B. Placement Officer Function

Deputy probation officers assigned to this function perform specialized tasks involving the placement and supervision of probationers in residential treatment programs for alcoholism, drug abuse and mental disorders. Probation supervision is provided while the probationer is in actual residence and for a limited time during his/her re-entry into the community before his/her case is transferred to a regular supervision deputy probation officer.

C. District Attorney Diversion Project

This AB 90 funded project is operated by the District Attorney's Office. The purpose of this project is to find ways to limit the penetration into the judicial system of adults charged with relatively minor offenses. One deputy probation officer and two probation assistants are assigned to this program and are supervised by an assistant district attorney.

D. Pre-Trial Release Service

This program provides pre-trial release services to the Courts.

An accelerated investigation is conducted regarding persons who are in pre-trial detention status in the County Jail. Reports and recommendations are provided to the Courts relevant to the issue of pre-trial detention.

In the jail liaison aspect of this activity, deputy probation officers serve as liaison between the Probation Department and the Sheriff's Office.

E. Adult Home Detention Program

The Adult Division operates an Adult Home Detention Program funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. The objectives of the program are to reduce jail overcrowding and to provide for more effective inmate transition into the community. Eligible local jail inmates who are on Probation and who have served 25% or more of their sentence are recommended for participation in the program by the probation officer. In those cases where the courts accept the recommendation of the probation officer, participants are supervised in caseloads of 25 persons or less by a team consisting of a probation officer and a probation assistant.

JUVENILE PROBATION SERVICES

The Juvenile Division of the Probation Department provides intake, investigation, supervision, placement and special services for youth offenders. The main goals of the Juvenile Division are to protect the public from delinquent behavior, to deter delinquent behavior, to assist youthful offenders in meeting the legal expectations of the community and, if the minor must be removed from home or the community, to secure a placement most appropriate for correction and rehabilitation. The principal services are implemented as follows:

I. Intake

Referrals are made to the Probation Department by parents or guardians, schools, by citation from law enforcement agencies, or by detention in Juvenile Hall. Referrals meeting specific criteria set forth in the Welfare and Institutions Code must be referred to the District Attorney, with minimal Probation investigation, for determination of court action. Most minors who are referred, and their parents, are interviewed and collateral investigations are made to assess adjustment at home, in school and in the community. The factors in this investigation are evaluated to determine if Juvenile Court intervention is required or if other alternative actions can serve to prevent further delinquent behavior; i.e., informal probation supervision, referral to another private or public agency for special services or, when appropriate, a dismissal from further action with the expectation that the family and minor will be able to prevent delinquent behavior from reoccurring.

II. Juvenile Court Investigations

When the Intake Officer decides that the offense for which the minor is referred warrants Juvenile Court action, a petition is prepared and sent to the District Attorney to be filed with the Juvenile Court. The probation officer is responsible for preparation of a social study (Court report) which includes comprehensive background data on the minor and his family, the circumstances of the offense committed by the minor, and analysis of the causes of the delinquent behavior and a plan to remedy the problems which resulted in the minor's acting-out behavior.

This plan is embodied in a recommendation to the Juvenile Court of what action is deemed necessary for community protection and for restructuring the behavior of the minor. It can range from dismissal, to Probation (including payment of restitution, a fine or performing community service), or commitment to an institution. The Juvenile Court reviews the Probation Report and Recommendation with the minor and his attorney and uses it as a basis for a dispositional decision (sentence for the crime). Under certain circumstances, a youth, 16 years or older, who commits a serious crime (felony) can be tried as an adult.

III. Supervision Services

The Juvenile Court may place the minor on probation and declare him or her a ward of the Court under the supervision of the probation officer. The supervising probation officer has the responsibility to help the minor and his/her family recognize the problems which contributed to the delinquent behavior and to make the necessary adjustments to prevent further delinquencies. The deputy probation officer can counsel the youth and parents or can refer them to other community services. The deputy probation officer assists in crises which may develop at home, at school or in the community.

IV. Placement Services

If a youth cannot remain in his own home and attend a local school because of serious delinquent or behavior problems, alternative living plans will be formulated and recommended to the Juvenile Court. These plans range from attending a day school with a highly structured and specialized program to placement outside the home in a foster home, group home or private institution. More severe cases may be recommended for commitment to one of the County institutions or to the California Youth Authority.

V. Special Services

There are a variety of other services provided by units of the Juvenile Division:

- A. Home Supervision: Intensive surveillance of minors who are ordered on Home Supervision status by the Court in lieu of Juvenile Hall detention, including daily contacts with a probation officer. By law, no more than 10 cases may be supervised at one time by a home supervision worker.
- B. Traffic Referees: Deputy probation officers are appointed by the Juvenile Court Judge to adjudicate cases of juveniles in West Contra Costa County who violate traffic laws.
- C. Record Sealing: Sealing of juvenile records is done by the Juvenile Division for those former probationers or referrals who qualify to have their records sealed under Section 781 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

VI. Other Services

Other services for non-delinquent minors offered by the Juvenile Division include:

- A. Status offenders (also referred to as runaways, incorrigibles or pre-delinquents) are now mainly served by other community agencies, principally the Children's Home Society. The Juvenile Division continues to be responsible for filing petitions and bringing the more difficult cases to Juvenile Court, supervising them and also making Court ordered out-of-home placements when this is necessary.
- B. Investigations and recommendations to the Superior Court are made on abandonment and guardianship petitions.
- C. Probate investigators conduct investigations and reviews for the Probate Department of the Superior Court. These reports assist the Court in determining need for conservatorships and guardianships for elderly and developmentally disabled persons.

JUVENILE INSTITUTIONS

Boys' Ranch

The Contra Costa County Boys' Ranch at Byron is a minimum security residential treatment facility for 74 delinquent boys (602 Welfare and Institutions Code). All commitments to this facility must be accomplished by order of the Juvenile Court.

This residential program provides a balanced mixture of school, work, recreation and counseling that is designed to assist youngsters in making a more satisfactory adjustment when they return to their own homes and communities. The treatment approach is tailored to the specific needs of each individual youngster. The length of stay will vary, depending upon the order of the Court and the boy's adjustment. The Court has at its disposal program options that range from 30 to 45 days, to longer term, six to nine months, serious offender programs.

The Boys' Ranch utilizes outside resources, to the extent possible, to augment and enrich the program. Some of these are: community-based drug and alcohol counseling programs; Los Medanos College; local recreational facilities and programs; inter-Ranch league for competition in softball, cross-country, and volleyball.

The East County Mental Health Clinic currently provides a group therapist on a once per week basis to do group therapy with a selected number of youngsters.

Girls' Treatment Center

This residential program, located in the Juvenile Hall Complex in Martinez, is designed for 19 girls between the ages of 13 to 18 who come within Section 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code and who require close supervision in a secure setting. The structured environment offers individual and group counseling. A limited amount of individual therapy and, when appropriate, family therapy are available to girls committed to programs ranging in length from 45 to 220 days. Psychological treatment services are provided through YIACT (Youth Interagency Assessment and Consultation Team).

A Pending Placement Program for girls requiring an adjustment period and/or evaluation prior to out-of-home placement is also available.

In addition to counseling, the Girls' Treatment Center includes a fully accredited school program and the opportunity to participate in a variety of recreational activities and informational programs involving health services, social problems and grooming. Volunteers and community groups are utilized to augment the programs.

The total program emphasis is to assist the girls in their efforts to modify anti-social attitudes and behaviors. The group living situation offers the opportunity for residents to learn constructive ways of relating to peers and authority figures, build self-esteem and confidence and gain valuable insights into counter-productive and sometimes self-destructive behavior patterns.

Boys' Treatment Center

The Boys' Treatment Center is a closed (secure) institutional program located in the Juvenile Hall Complex in Martinez. The program is designed to treat delinquent (602 W&I Code) male wards of the Juvenile Court who have failed in open public or private treatment institutions, or who have demonstrated such a lack of self-control that an open setting is not a realistic alternative. The Center has a 20-bed capacity and is populated by youngsters who range between 12 and 18 years of age.

All wards entering the Center are assigned a counselor who coordinates the treatment plan with the school staff, counseling staff and the probation officer. The youngsters are involved in individual, small group and total group counseling sessions. As with Girls' Center, YIACT is the primary provider of psychological services. Daily assessments are made of each ward's behavior, attitude and progress toward his overall goals while at the Center.

The school staff assesses the educational strengths and weaknesses of each student and designs for each an individualized program. A speech therapist and a school psychologist are available when necessary. Beyond remedial academics, the school program includes such enrichment activities as crafts and group meetings. Education and vocational alternatives are examined with the student to attempt development of realistic goals and ways to achieve them.

Juvenile Hall

The 140 bed capacity Juvenile Hall is located in Martinez. It provides temporary care for juveniles under the age of 18 who are awaiting a Court hearing or a Court ordered placement.

The activity and recreation programs provided for residents by the staff of the Juvenile Hall are augmented by the successful participation of individuals, community groups, and other agencies who provide programs and activities designed to promote the welfare of Juvenile Hall residents. Many individual citizens and students from Bay Area colleges and universities volunteer their time to participate in programs with residents. Likewise, several organized groups in the community sponsor programs for the residents and provide them with recreational activities and items such as T.V. and games.

Juvenile Hall School Program

The year-round school program in the Juvenile Hall, operated by the County Superintendent of Schools, is conducted by a principal and six teachers. The curriculum for this very transient population includes reading, math, social studies, health science education and physical education. One teacher has a self-contained secondary class which serves children remaining within the facility 30 days or longer. And, the Learning Center houses a resource teacher, three tutors and a teacher's aide who serve the special education and compensatory needs of the students throughout the entire Juvenile Hall Complex.

Juvenile Hall Chaplaincy Program

The Chaplaincy program at Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall is designed to provide pastoral care for the young people brought before the attention of juvenile authorities. Through voluntary attendance at Chapel services, discussion groups, individual and family counseling, Bible studies and special programs, young people are encouraged to develop their personal inner resources in order to cope with and contribute to community living.

Juvenile Community Service Program

The Juvenile Community Service Program is designed to provide a disposition alternative to the Juvenile Court, as well as to provide a vehicle for the diversion of first offenders and/or less serious offenders from the Juvenile Justice System by the Probation Department. Each minor assigned to the program is allowed the opportunity to make restitution to society by being directed to complete a specific number of days of uncompensated community work. The work is completed on the weekends and the minors are allowed to remain in their homes avoiding the expenditure of County funds for their incarceration.

Juvenile Hall Auxiliary

The Juvenile Hall Auxiliary is a community sponsored, non-profit organization whose main concern is to be of assistance to detained and dependent children under the jurisdiction of the Contra Costa County Probation Department. For the past 25 years, the Auxiliary has provided for some 2,500 troubled children each year materials and services which will encourage them to recognize their own worth and to become productive members of society.

The Auxiliary assists children with special needs, provides enrichment programs, Christmas and birthday presents for those detained in Juvenile Hall, monthly stipends to the units in the Juvenile Hall complex, Byron Boys' Ranch, Girls' Treatment Center and Boys' Treatment Center, and also assists the Children's Receiving Center.

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